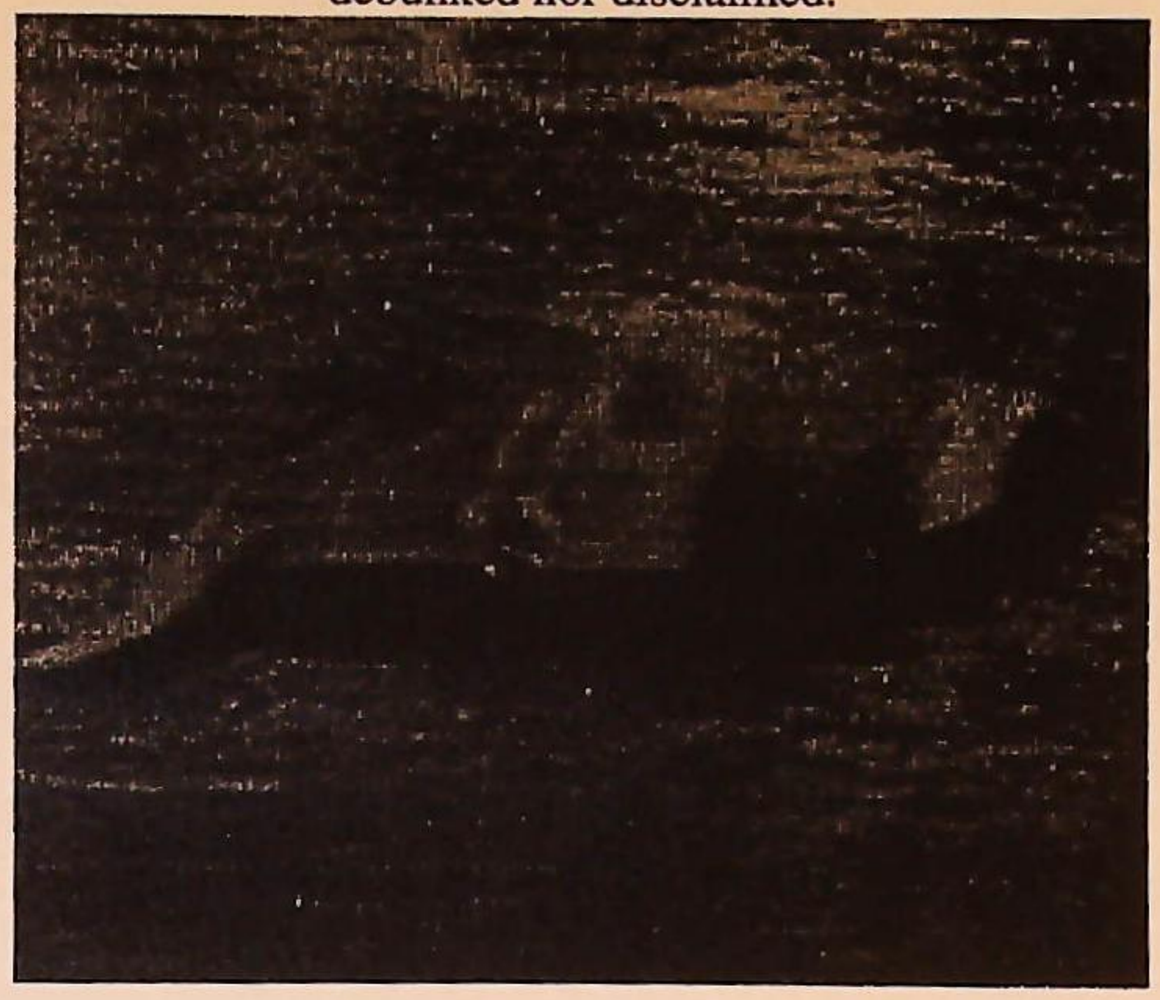
The first known photograph of the Loch Ness Monster, taken by Hugh Gray in 1933. To date it has not been debunked nor disclaimed.



nessie photo hoax 1

From: andrewst@u.washington.edu (Andrew Steinberg)
Newsgroups: alt.folklore.urban
Subject: Nessie: The Article
Date: 16 Mar 1994 03:08:45 GMT

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Sunday Telegraph

March 13, 1994, Sunday

SECTION: Pg. 1

LENGTH: 557 words

HEADLINE: Revealed: the Loch Ness picture hoax Monster was a toy submarine

BYLINE: by James Langton

BODY:
THE most famous picture of the Loch Ness monster - its long neck rising from the depths - is today revealed as one of the greatest hoaxes of the 20th century. The celebrated monster is a toy submarine bought for a few shillings inthe London suburb of Richmond and fitted with a classic sea serpent head and neck made from plastic wood.

For 60 years the picture - known as the Surgeon's Photograph - has been attributed to Colonel Robert Wilson, a respectable Harley Street gynaecologist who claimed to have seen "something in the water" on April 19, 1934. In fact, Wilson was the front man for a conspiracy to hoodwink Fleet Street by Marmaduke
Wetherell, a film-maker and self-styled "big game hunter"
and his two sons. The five men involved are Wetherell, sent by the Daily Mail to Loch Ness to track down the monster in 1933, his son Ian, stepson Christian Spurling, Colonel Wilson and Maurice Chambers, a London insurance broker.

Chambers has always been reported as being with Wilson in Loch Ness. What has remained concealed is that he was also a friend of Wetherell. All those involved are now dead, the last being Christian Spurling at the age of 90 last November. Before his death, Spurling revealed how he had made the "monster" to two Loch Ness researchers, David Martin and Alastair Boyd, who have subsequently unravelled the whole story. Spurling told Martin and Boyd that he got a message from his stepfather in January 1933 saying:
"Christian, can you make me a monster?" Ian Wetherell bought the basic materials, and his step-brother, a skilled model-maker, built the creature in eight days. "It was modelled on the
idea of a sea serpent," Christian recalled. The finished monster was a foot highand about 18 inches long with a lead keel added to give it extra stability. It was taken to Loch Ness to be photographed and four plates were then given to Wilson, who had already worked out his story. The famous picture was then sold to the Daily Mail as a world exclusive. Wetherell was already well-known to the public after footprints of the

"monster" he found on a beach in Loch Ness in December 1933 were revealed by the Natural History Museum to have been made by a dried hippo foot - perhaps part of an umbrella stand. Mocked by the rest of Fleet Street, his motive may well have been revenge. He told his son Ian: "We'll give them their monster." Wilson, the surgeon, gave only one interview, in 1956, after taking the photograph, and was always wary of saying he believed the picture showed the monster. He was also warned by the medical authorities that the publicity was bringing his profession into disrepute.

All those involved were certainly unprepared for the worldwide interest which their little joke provoked. Until now, the Surgeon's Photograph has been regarded as genuine.Even those who never accepted that it showed the monster itself believe it to besome other creature such as a fish or an otter. The silhouette of the neck and head has always been used as a crucial piece of evidence for those who believe the Loch Ness monster is real - having evolved from a plesiosaur-type creature. Devotees include the late Sir Peter Scott and the BBC newsreader Nicholas Witchell, whose book on the monster includes several pages of analysis into the animal's physiognomy based on the fake photograph.

January 25, 1995

coincidence. To readers of the Daily Mail, he became "Mr M. A. Wetherell, the Central African big game hunter" (he had blasted a few wild animals while filming Livingstone), hired to find the monster and, in particular, scoop the rival Daily Express. With a lucrative contract in his back pocket and a Mail photographer and "special correspondent" at his side, Wetherell arrived at the Loch on December 18, 1933. Even the Mail was astonished at how quickly he got results. "

Loch Ness Monster Is A Fact, Not A Legend" the paper trumpeted on December 21. A succession of smaller headlines told the story: "Hunter's Deduction from New Find. Tracks Only A Few Hours Old. Tests To Be Made." The cause of all the excitement was two footprints in soft mud on the south shore of the loch near Fort Augustus. Wetherell had stumbled across them less than 48 hours after landing on the beach by motor boat. The "spoor" he declared was "less than a few hours old". The animal was an amphibian: "A four fingered beast . . . and it has feet or pads about eight inches across . . . a very powerful soft-footed animal about 20 ft long." Plaster casts were taken of the footprints and sent to the Natural History Museum. All through Christmas and New Year, the world - or at least that part of it egged on by the Daily Mail - waited in breathless expectation for the museum's verdict. On January 4 it came. The footprints were identical and from a young hippo. It was most likely that the foot was in use somewhere as an umbrella stand. A gale of laughter swept Fleet Street. The Mail's Loch Ness coverage shrank with the speed of rapidly deflating balloon. Wetherell quietly returned to London on January 18 with suggestions that the footprints were the work of pranksters. Nessie was dead. Until the "Surgeon's Photograph", published in triumph by the Mail three months later.

Unlike the humiliation of the previous expedition, here was conclusive proof that something did exist in Loch Ness, and with a respectable surgeon and former officer as its source. Except that Colonel Robert Wilson did not take the famous photograph. It also was the work of Duke Wetherell. The key to the mystery is Maurice Chambers, named in original newspaper reports as the co-lessee with Wilson of a wildfowl shoot on the Beauly Firth near Inverness. What has remained concealed for 60 years is that Chambers was also a friend of Duke Wetherell. The real story has been uncovered by David Martin, a zoologist with the Loch Ness and Morar scientific project and Alastair Boyd, a fellow researcher.

Their first clue was a small diary story, ironically in The Sunday Telegraph in December 1975, reporting that Wetherell's son Ian claimed he and his father had once fabricated a photograph of the Loch Ness monster. The article did not mention which photograph or mention Colonel Wilson - the surgeon - but it did name Maurice Chambers as a co-conspirator. Then David Martin remembered reading of Chambers before - but as a friend of the more dubious Wetherell. At the time of The Sunday Telegraph interview, Ian Wetherell was 63 and running a Chelsea pub. When Martin and Boyd arrived at the pub it was 18 years later and they discovered he was dead. The trail led to Duke Wetherell's step-son, living on the south coast and in poor health. Christian Spurling, now nearly 90, had kept the secret of the Loch Ness monster for nearly six decades.

Faced with a series of straight questions from Martin and Boyd, however, he gave straight answers. It was an angry and irritated Duke Wetherell who returned from Scotland to the family home in Twickenham in January 1934. The Mail, in particular, had made it clear what they thought of the hippo footprints. "All right," he is said to have told his son Ian, "We'll give them their monster."

Ian, then 21, wassent out to buy the raw materials - a toy submarine and

several tins of plastic wood. Christian, the son of a marine painter, was a keen model-maker. "All I got was a message from Wetherell saying 'Can you make me a monster?' " he recalled. Wetherell's sons worked out the details together. "I said 'well, it's a monster so it's got to have long neck, I suppose," remembered Christian. "I just sat down and made it. It was modelled on the idea of a sea serpent." The "monster" took eight days to make. The head, neck and body were built over the conning tower in stages as the plastic wood hardened with a space for the clockwork key.Lead soldered underneath gave it stability.

Sea-trials were conducted in a pond and then, probably in February or March, Ian and Duke Wetherell returned to Loch Ness. In a quiet bay the monster was floated out into the shallows. Ian took the photographs. What happened next is not completely clear. Duke Wetherell clearly confided in his friend Maurice Chambers. It was a bit of harmless fun, but to make the hoax work, he needed someone convincing who would enter into the spirit of the thing. Did Chambers know anyone suitable? He did. Robert Wilson.

Wilson was given his lines and four photographic plates to take to the Inverness chemist shop. With the resulting photograph was also developed the myth of Loch Ness. Why has the full story remained secret for so long? The Surgeon's Photograph has withstood rigorous scientific examination. It has been enhanced by computers; explained variously as a plesiosaur, a tree trunk or an otter. No book or article on the Loch Ness monster is complete without it. From the waves, the monster's neck has been calculated at more than a metre. Observers have noted a "flipper" in the water in front of the beast. None have realised they are seeing the deck of toy submarine.

Why did those involved keep their silence? No one realised Wetherell and his sons were involved and so they were never approached. All were certainly overwhelmed and unprepared by the publicity the photograph generated. Their little joke had got out of hand and the least painful solution was to keep quiet. Later the surgeon, Robert Wilson, never claimed more than to have seen "something in the water". The British Medical Association had warned him the story was in danger of bringing his profession into disrepute. To ward off subsequent inquiries he hinted to researchers that he could not say more because his companion on that fateful morning was a married woman. Today all those involved are dead. The surgeon died in Australia in 1969. Duke Wetherell and Chambers were dead by the mid-Fifties. Spurling died last November, shortly after recording his version of events.

What about the "monster?" As Duke and Ian Wetherell waded on the shores of Loch Ness with their camera and model, they heard a water bailiff approaching. Duke put his foot out and sunk it. And there it probably lies to this day, a small lump of rusting metal and some crumbling plastic wood. All that remains of the Loch Ness Monster.

January 25, 1995

LOCH NESS MONSTER

Where is the Loch Ness Monster?

What is the Loch Ness Monster?

Does it really exist?

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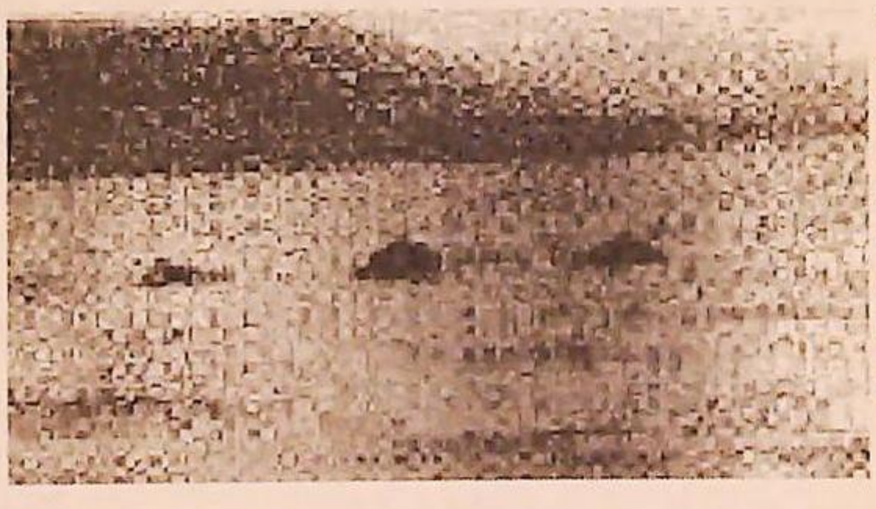
WHERE IS THE LOCH NESS MONSTER?



The Loch Ness Monster is said to be in the Loch Ness lake. The Loch Ness lake is one of the largest and deepest lakes in Scotland. It is in northcentral Scotland in the Great Glen (Glen Mor). The lake is about 25 miles (40 km) long (southwest-northeast) and about one mile (1.6 km) wide. Loch Ness is part of the Caledonian Canal system joining the North Sea with the Atlantic Ocean. Since the early 1930's there have been reports of the existence of the Loch Ness monster.

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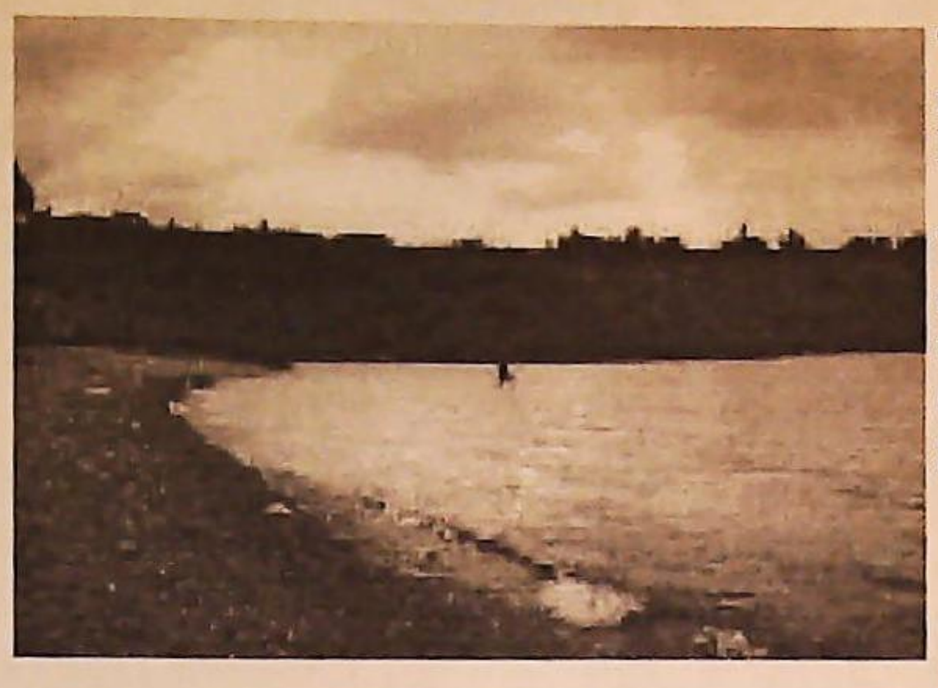
WHAT IS THE LOCH NESS MONSTER?



The Loch Ness Monster, first reported in 1933, is perhaps the most widely publicized sea serpent. It supposedly inhabits Loch Ness, a deep lake in Scotland.

The existence of this creature is made by sightings people have made and photographic images taken of it. Many people believe that the size (21 square miles) and great depth of the loch (almost 800 feet), together with potential underwater caves, gives the monster many places to hide.

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DOES IT REALLY EXIST?

A recent attempt to find the monster occurred in October, 1987 when 20 cruisers methodically swept the Loch with sonar equipment bouncing sound waves from the surface down to the bottom and electronically recording any contacts. Many salmon were found, but no monster. Even though most scientists believe the likelihood of a monster is small, they keep an open mind as scientists should and wait for concrete proof in the form of skeletal evidence or the actual capture of such a creature.

Although the monster was not found many say that it could easily have hidden in one of the largest lakes in the world. Many people argue that a large marine animal may be in the lake, having entered through the Caledonian Canal.

In any case we have to wait and see. Who knows there might be one endangered monster somewhere out there or it could all be a hoax. Decide yourself.

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Loch Ness Submarine

RESERVATIONS

The LOCH NESS SUBMARINE

0456 450706
RESERVATIONS

Our deep diving submarine offers divers and their non diving colleagues, the opportunity to join underwater expeditions that explore a most unique dive site "Loch Ness".

The depth and dark water will present little problem, as the submarine is designed to operate at 1000ft, and is fitted with powerful underwater lights and large viewports (similar to driving in a car at night). These will be used throughout the dive to illuminate selected areas of interest. Sonar equipment, video cameras, and scientific instrumentation will help to locate, and record unusual targets. Each submarine dive will explore an area of the earth's surface that is little known, and in many cases has never before been seen.

The "Loch Ness Submarine" will allow everyone the chance to explore Inner Space in complete comfort. The underwater scenery is unusual, with the deep wall being only a short distance from the western shore, and there is always the exciting possibility of sighting the mysterious monster. Based at the CLANSMAN MARINA, DRUMNADROCHIT, the submarine descends approximately two hundred yards offshore, exploring the Loch to depths of 700 feet. Dive time is usually one hour per trip, with one pilot and five passengers.

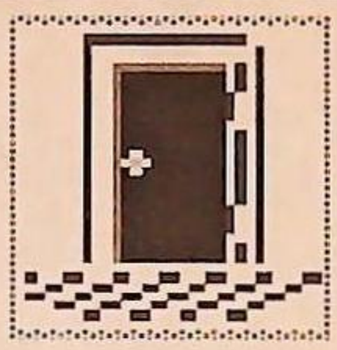
Loch Ness has a surprisingly varied profundal fauna, with over thirty different species having been recorded. Zooplankton migrates vertically from the thermocline during the day to the shallow waters at night. Fish life is varied and includes Salmon, Sea Trout, Brown Trout, Charr, Stickleback, Brook Lamprey, Pike, and Loch Ness Eels. In addition there have been numerous sightings over the years of "The Monster".

Places are strictly limited on the submarine dives, and advance reservations are required.

THE LOCH NESS SUBMARINE
CLANSMAN MARINA
DRUMNADROCHIT

"The Loch Ness Submarine" is also perhaps the ultimate monster hunt.

Boating **More**



Nessie is Not Dead

We are worried that there have recently been disturbing reports, in the American and British media, that the Loch Ness Monster is dead. Two vital facts must be pointed out:

> The accompanying picture with one of these stories shows a large floating object surrounded by bathers wearing skimpy bathing outfits ad sunglasses (definitely not likely here in the Highlands at this time of year!)
>
> Nessie has alternative accommodation here in cyberspace - and is therefore not always to be seen splashing about in Loch Ness!

So, forget the vicious rumours which have circulated since records began.

Nessie may be shy but she's not dead!!!

If you don't believe us look take a look around these pages or email our *Monster Expert* with your questions

Return to Nessie's home page

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The White House (Elegant home page with nice example of a "clickable map"; download some audio "meows" from Socks, the First Cat.)
THOMAS: Legislative Information on the Internet (House Speaker Newt Gingrich has been promoting this heavily.)
Pulp Fiction official home page
Courtroom Bloopers
Elevator Funnies

Have any suggestions for improvement? Send e-mail to
edlipson@syr.edu

The Loch Ness Monster

REFERENCES

The Museum of Natural History frequently receives requests for information concerning the Loch Ness Monster. A recent attempt to find the monster occurred in October, 1987 when 20 cruisers methodically swept the Loch with sonar equipment bouncing sound waves from the surface down to the bottom and electronically recording any contacts. Many salmon were found, but no monster. To date, the actual existence of a monster in Loch Ness has not been proven. Even though most scientists believe the likelihood of a monster is small, they keep an open mind as scientists should and wait for concrete proof in the form of skeletal evidence or the actual capture of such a creature.

The Smithsonian has no scientist on staff directly involved in efforts to find the Loch Ness monster and has no pamphlet or brochure available for general distribution on this subject. We suggest, however, that those individuals interested in such a phenomenon examine the references that follow and join the International Society of Cryptozoology, a scientific organization that critically looks at issues involving unknown creatures of unexpected form and size, and subjects them to technical review. The Society sponsors the ISC Newsletter and Cryptozoology, an interdisciplinary journal devoted to publication of responsible studies, field reports, and book reviews on such creatures. Membership inquiries and correspondence should be addressed to the Secretary-Treasurer, P.O. Box 43070, Tucson, Arizona 85733.

The following books and periodicals are a sampling of the literature on the Loch Ness monster. They can be obtained from most large libraries or may be requested through an inter-library loan.

BOOKS

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1986 **The Enigma of Loch Ness.** University of Illinois Press, Urbana. (Excellent review of the history of the search and of the individuals involved; extensive bibliography.)

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Nature, Vol. 258, December 11, 1975, pp. 466-468, Scott and Rines, "Naming the Loch Ness monster."

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Sea Technology, Vol.18, No. 1, January 1977, pp. 35-37,49, Martin Klein, "Sonar scores in Loch Ness."

Smithsonian, Vol. 7, No. 3, June 1976, pp. 96-105, John P. Wiley, Jr., "Cameras, sonar close in on denizen of Loch Ness."

Go to start of Encyclopedia Smithsonian

Hi Scott this is your page.

Following are the photos sent by Nora Jones.

Dear Scott,

I was doing some research on Nessie because of the sightings me and my Family had via the Live web cam and I stumbled across your page and picture of that eel.

I had a very good experience and it was one I'll never forget however Scotland only prints what they want the public to see. I got a total of 4 really good clear pictures and I want someone to look at them who is experience and that knows what they are looking at Some one who isn't going to say it is a rare 20 foot long necked seal or something as ridiculous.

If you would like I will send you the pictures I feel so Cheated , like they know more than they say and they were so selective by which picture they put up on the site for viewing. when the best one is the one they refuse to publish.

I have thought for years she was a plesiosaur but now I think Giant eel due to the 20 foot arch we caught in action in the middle of the loch. But I have been researching eels and the only discrepancy is I cant find any reports, pictures or theroes that eels swim with half there body out of the water showing head and neck. and this is the first thing me and my husband observed on the live web cam.

Please if you are truly interested in seeing the pictures and sharing views and knowledge contact me via email. Cause I want the world to see what I saw and hope one day someone gets even better proof. SO May have died not knowing and it unnerves me cause I think Scotland knows more than they tell. Thank You Nora R Clizbe (409)986-5807 if you want to discuss this over the phone

Dear sir, the best web cam so far sor sightings is the one on lochness live I

have gotten several clear good pictures from it However scotland only prints what they want to and they refuse to print the best picture I got and chose to print the smallest least astonishing picture I took. You need to get some funding for a cam like that one it is contantly moving Like watching a documentary and it is crystal clear so you can see the action and images. If you want to catch Bessie on cam this is the best way If you want the pictures I took to anaylize them or publish them you can have them i am not in this for money only in science I want the world to see her and know her email me back if you want my story and the picutures or call me at (409)-986-5807

MONSTER TRACKER

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Cover Art
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Video Cam - Photo Proof Of Lake Monsters!

In a news story released today (October 24, 1999), Dirk Vander
President of Lynx Canada Inc., a website and marketing develop
company, announced that his website "Monster Tracker" had re
possible photographic proof of lake monsters. Complete news re
more photos. **Click here.**

Mrs. Jones sent "Monster Tracker" three photographs that she captured from the "Bessie On The Net" website. She was insistent that she watched large objects moving across the lake on her computer, and there was no question in her mind that she was observing large animals. The first image may very well be a large animal, but it is so indistinct and ambiguous that it's evidential value is minimal. However, the other two images are quite intriguing. In fact, the second image may be the best photographic evidence of these animals since the 1970's.

Photos may be best evidence since 1970's

Scott Mardis, a contributing writer to "Monster Tracker" and a
of the International Society of Cryptozoology, a scientific organ
dedicated to the study of evidence for the existence of undiscov
animal species located in Tucson, Arizona, has studied the photo
and has compiled a prelimary report which can be found at
http://www.aps.on.ca/report.html".

In conclusion, the Nora Jones photographic images effectively demonstrate that, under the right circumstances, video monitori systems, such as the "Bessie cam" and "Nessie cam", are likely t

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fruitful results.

Any individual or company interested in sponsoring or contribut financially to the research of the "Monster Tracker" website is ir contact Dirk Vander Ploeg at (905) 312-4545.

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Exclusive Interview with Mr. John Kraft. He and his family Bessie in 1991. Read the entire interview!

Monster Tracker Poll

In your opinion what do you beleive lake monsters are?

- O Prehistoric reptiles.
- O Giant Eels
- O Giant Squids
- O Giant Snakes
- O Optical illusions caused by light/atmospheric condition

Your email

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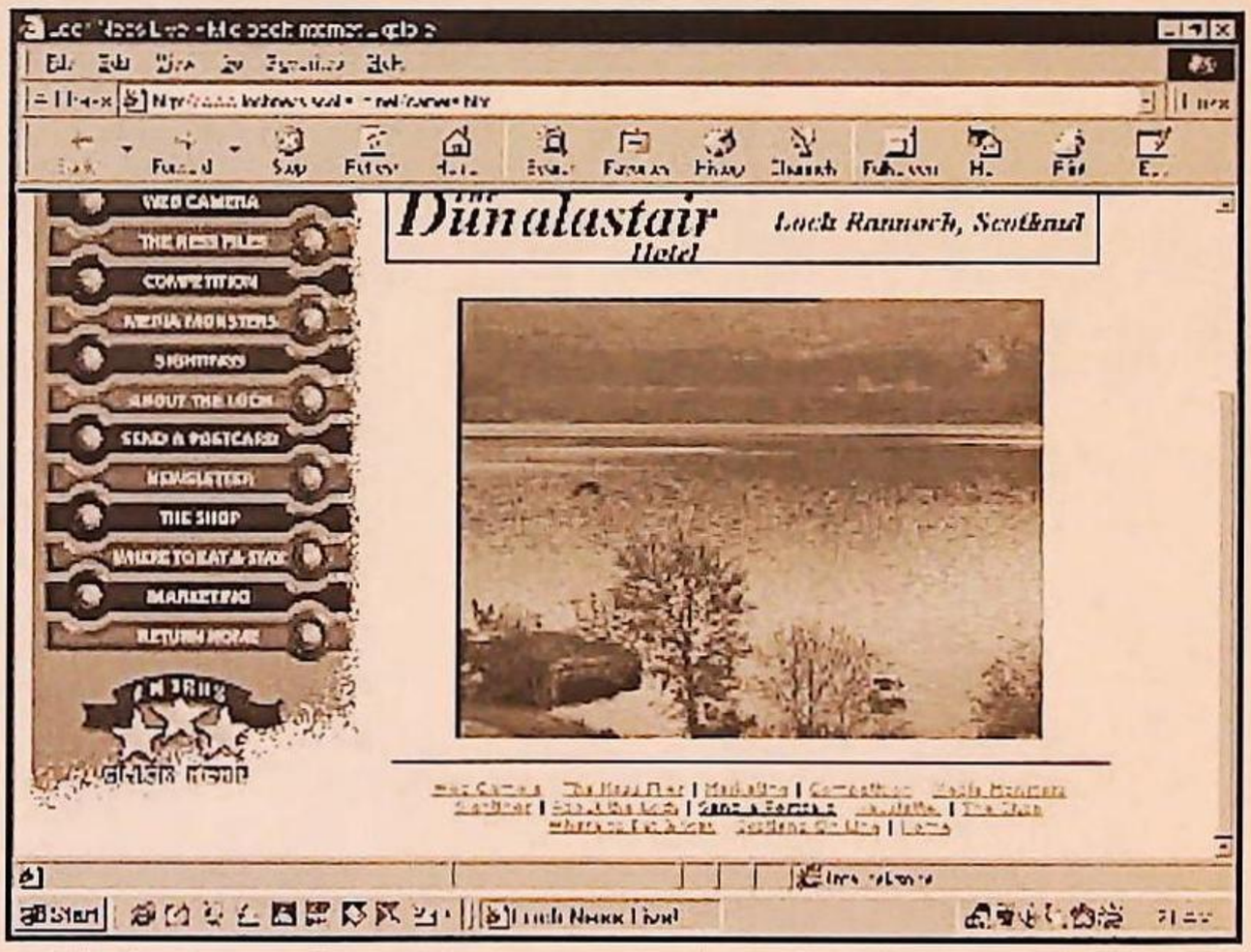
PHOTOS TAKEN BY NESSIE CAM MAY PROVE EXISTENCE OF "LAKE CREATURE"

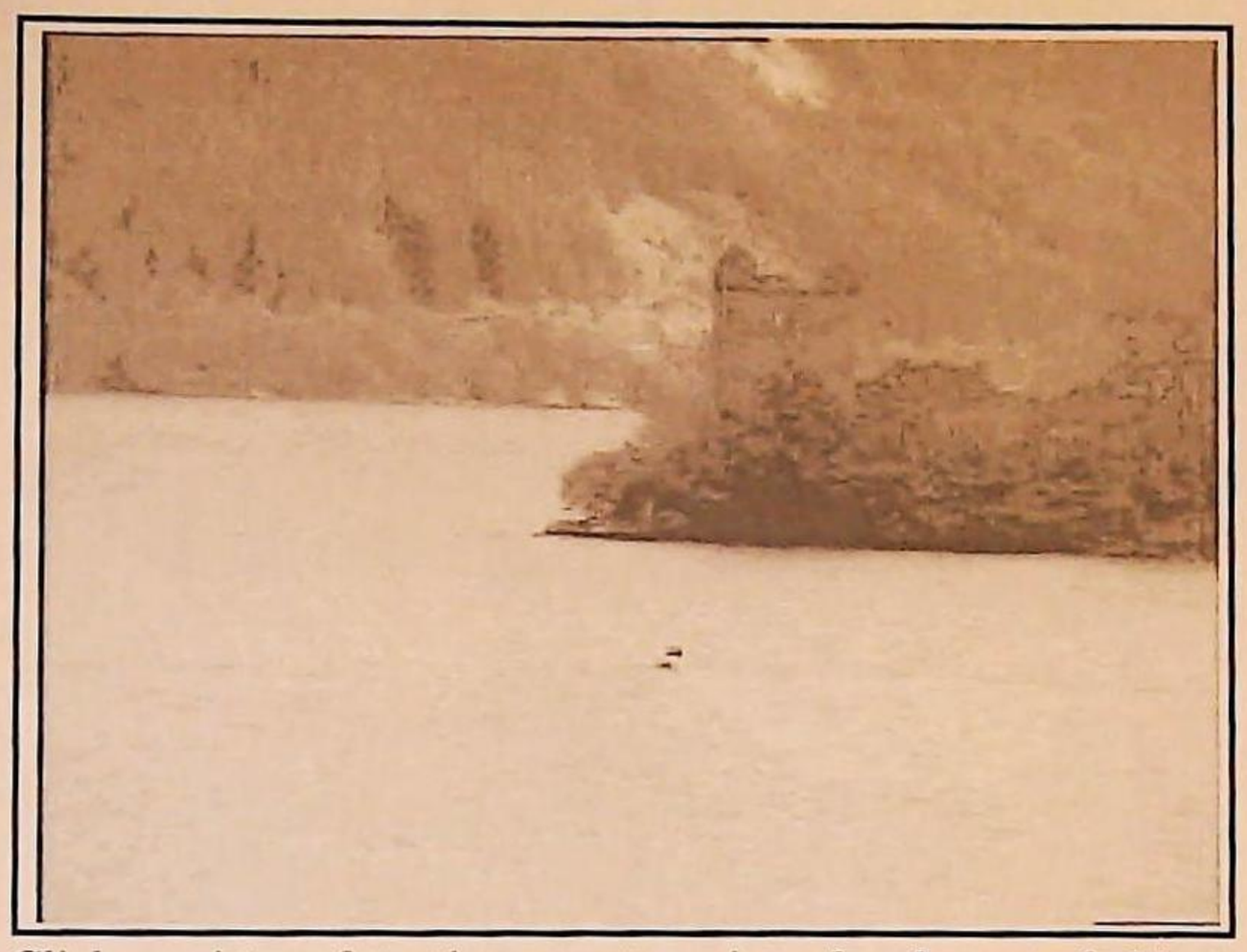
Dirk Vander Ploeg, owner of Lynx Canada Inc., has just published exclusive photographs and a prelimary scientific paper that may prove the existence of the Loch Ness Monster on his website "Monster Tracker", located at http://www.aps.on.ca.

HAMILTON, ONT. CANADA -- 10/24/99 -- Mrs. Nora Jones of Hitchcock, Texas, U.S.A., contacted the "Monster Tracker" by email and included her personal impressions concerning what she and her family saw on the "Loch Ness Live" website located at http://www.lochness.scotland.net/camera.htm



Click picture for enlargement or here for closeup of object.

Mrs. Jones sent "Monster Tracker" three photographs. She was insistent that she watched large objects moving across the lake on her computer, and there was no question in her mind that she was observing large animals. The first image may very well be a large animal, but it is so indistinct and ambiguous that it's evidential value is minimal. However, the other two images are quite intriguing. In fact, the second image may be the best photographic evidence of these animals since the 1970's. This is the photo which appears above.



Click on picture for enlargement or here for closeup of object.

Scott Mardis, a member of the International Society of Cryptozoology, a scientific organization dedicated to the study of evidence for the existence of undiscovered animal species located in Tucson, Arizona, has studied the photographs and has compiled a prelimary report which can be found at http://www.aps.on.ca/report.html".

"Since the very existence of lake monsters is controversial and all evidence in support of the idea is intensely scrutinized, I strongly urge that scientific evaluation of the Nora Jones photographs be done, if for no other reason than to strengthen their value as evidence", stated Mr. Mardis.

Photos may be best evidence since 1970's

In conclusion, the Nora Jones photographic images effectively demonstrate that, under the right circumstances, video monitoring systems, such as the "Bessie cam" and "Nessie cam", are likely to yield fruitful results.

Any individual or company interested in sponsoring or contributing financially to the research of the "Monster Tracker" website is invited to contact Dirk Vander Ploeg at (905) 312-4545.

Contact: Dirk Vander Ploeg, aps.on.ca
Voice: 905-312-4545
Email: sales@lynxcanada.com
or
Contact: Scott Mardis
Voice: 802-655-1020
Email: scott@aps.on.ca

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NORA JONE'S LOCH NESS PHOTOS

by Scott Mardis

(Scott Mardis is a former volunteer worker in the Vertebrate Palaeontology Dept. of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, Pa., and U.S.A. He is also a member of the International Society of Cryptozoology, a scientific organization dedicated to the study of evidence for the existence of undiscovered animal species located in Tucson, Arizona.) You can email Scott scott@aps.on.ca

Recently, Mrs. Nora Jones of Hitchcock, Texas, U.S.A., emailed me concerning several photographic images that she captured off the so-called "Nesssiecam", an Internet website connected to video monitors strategically located at various points around Loch Ness, Scotland, U.K., that monitor the surface of Loch Ness. This website is controlled and sponsored by the Official Loch Ness Monster Fan Club. I received her email through the "Monster Tracker website", an Internet website similar to the "Nessiecam" website, except that the cam monitors Lake Erie for "Bessie, the Lake Erie monster" and is owned and controlled by Dirk Vander Ploeg of Lynx Canada Inc.

As to the dates and specific circumstances under which these images were captured, only Mrs. Jones can clarify, because I have not had a chance to do an in-depth interview with her concerning this. This report is very tentative and only represents my subjective impressions concerning these images at this point in time. However, I can see no obvious evidence of tampering with these images and am sufficiently impressed by some of them that I think they are worthy of notice by the cryptozoological community. I am writing this tentative report in the hope that someone in the scientific community will take note of these images and help to expedite research into theses images using optical imaging techniques, similar to those used in the study of the 1977 Sandra Mansi photograph of the lake Champlain "monster" and the underwater photographs obtained by the Academy of Applied Sciences, Concord, N.H., U.S.A., of the Loch Ness "monster", hereafter referred to as Nessiteras rhombopteryx. Nessiteras rhombopteryx is the formal zoological name bestowed upon the Loch ness animals by biologist Sir Peter Scott and

Dr. Robert Rines in 1975.

In the case of all three photographic images sent to me by Mrs. Jones, she was insistent that she watched these large objects moving and that there was no question in her mind that what she was observing were large animals. The first image she sent me, while it very well may be a large animal, is so indistinct and ambiguous that it's evidential value is minimal. However, the other two images are quite intriguing. In fact, the second image may be the best photographic evidence of these animals since the 1970's.

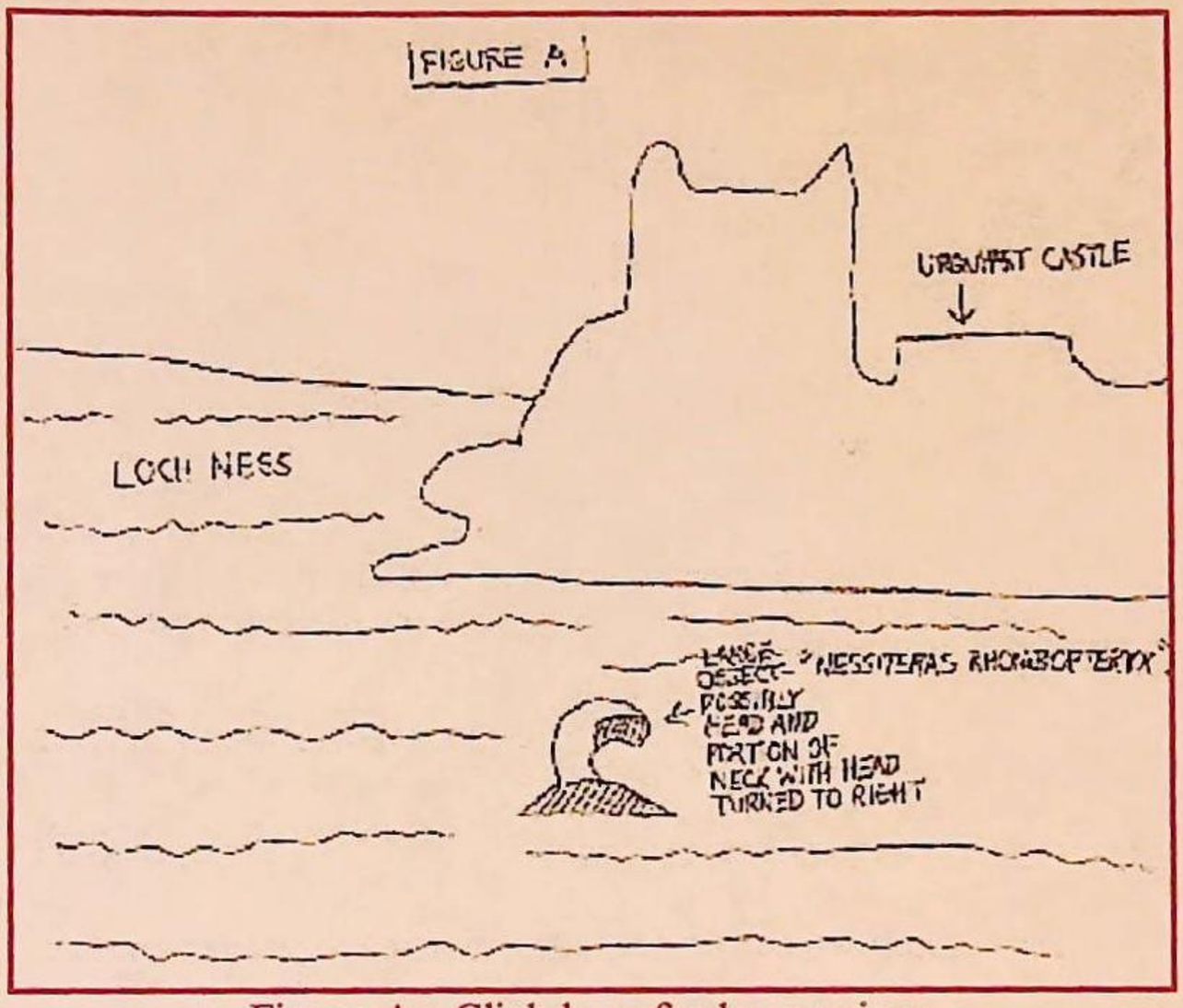


FIGURE A
URQUHART CASTLE
LOCH NESS
LARGE OBJECT - POSSIBLY HEAD AND PART OF NECK WITH HEAD TURNED TO RIGHT
"NESSITERAS RHOMBOPTERYX"

Figure A - Click here for larger view.

In figure A, I have given my initial impressions of this photograph and it is self-explanatory. To my eye, this photograph is corroborative of past photographic evidence for N. rhombopteryx, particularly the well-known "Surgeon's photo" of 1934. Though claims that fraud was involved in the creation of the "Surgeon's photo" received wide exposure in 1994, these claims remains largely unsubstantiated and many researchers are still inclined to view this photo as an authentic photograph of a specimen of N. rhombopteryx. The second Jones image bears even more resemblance to the 1977 Sandra Mansi photograph of the Lake Champlain "monster", which itself also greatly resembles the "Surgeon's photo". For comparative purposes, I have produced sketches of both the 1934 and 1977 photographs in Figure B. I am of the opinion that the Lake Champlain animals and N. rhombopteryx, if not co generic, are closely related, but others do not share this view.

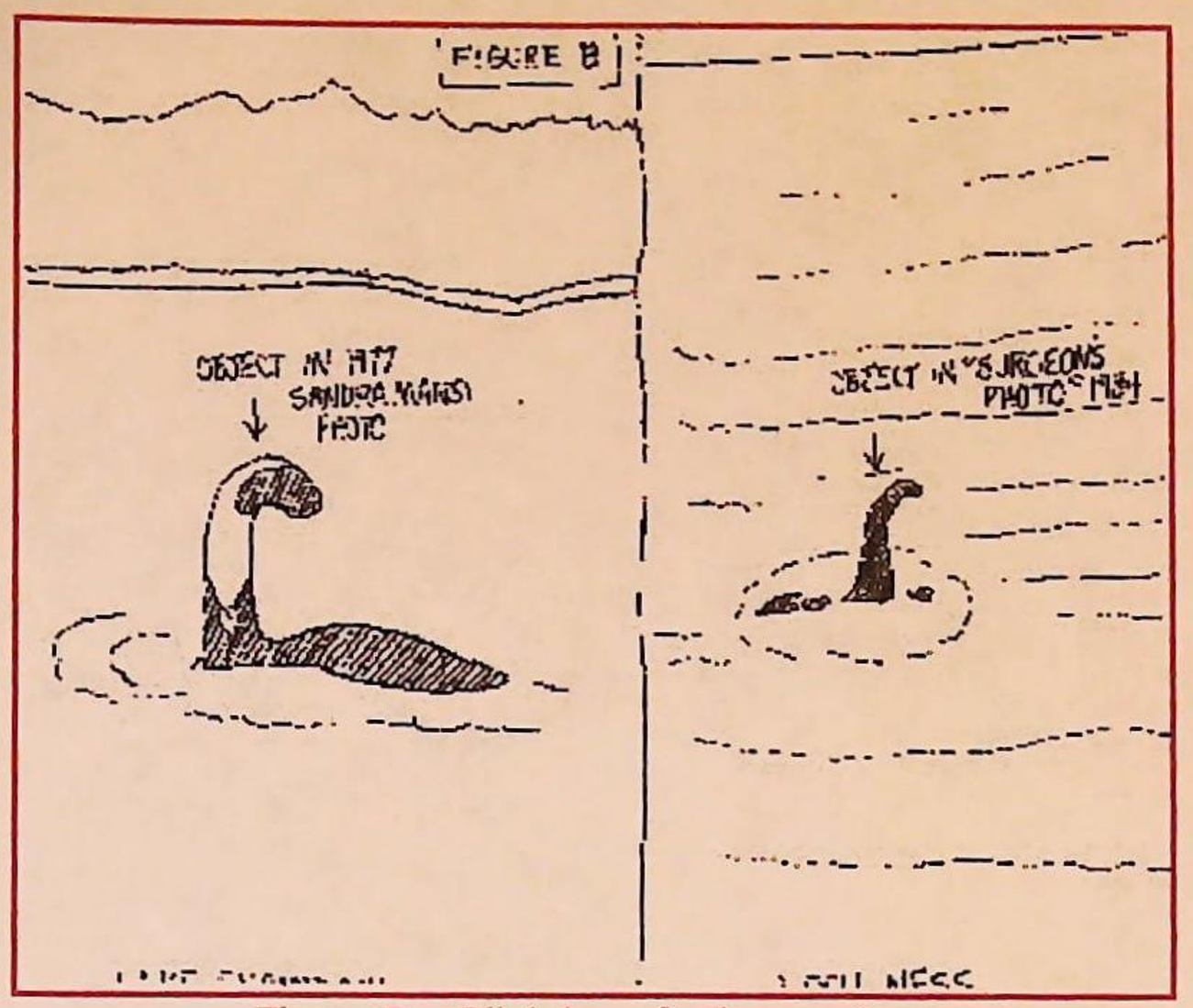
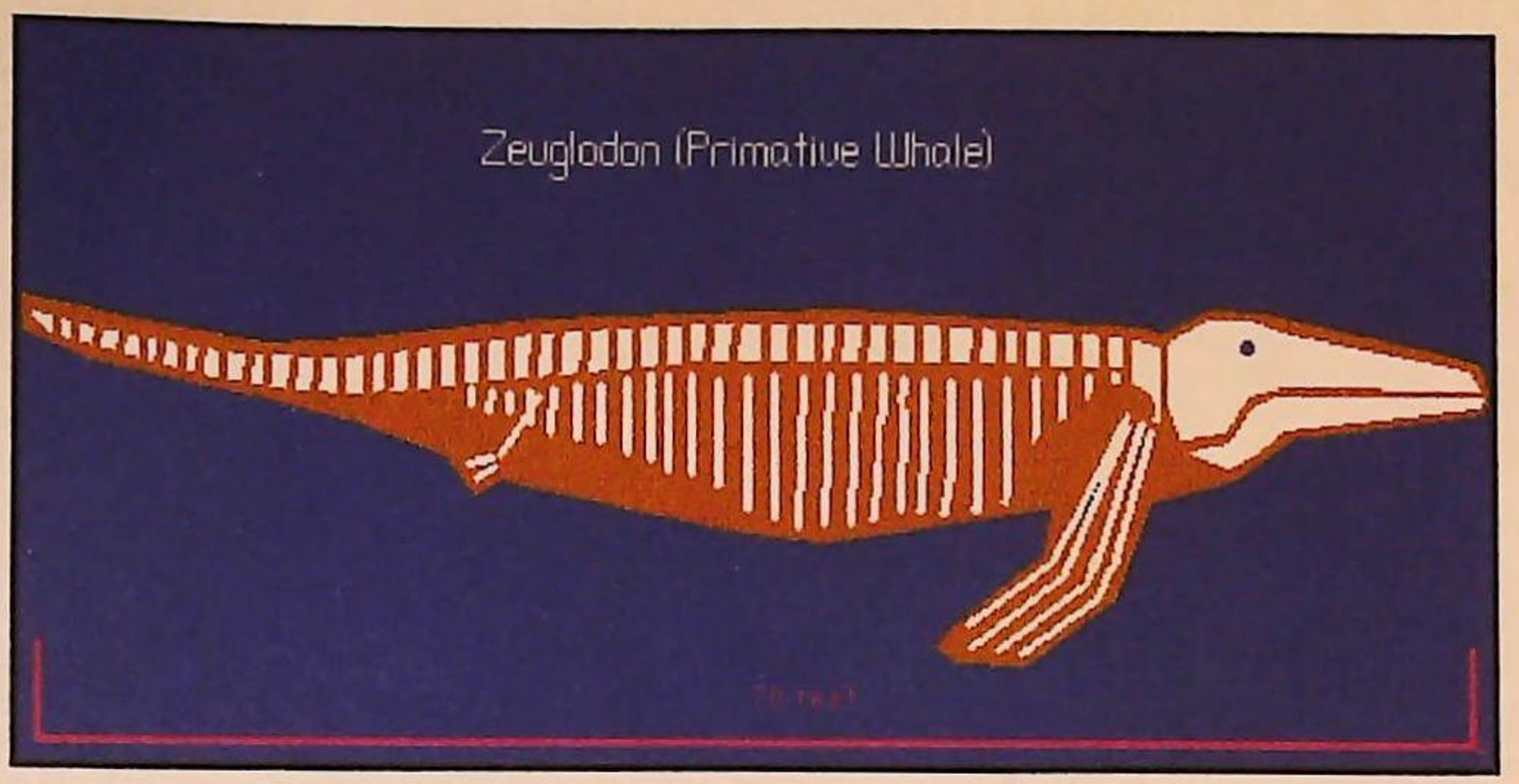


Figure B - Click here for larger view.

In Figure B, I have given my impression of the third Jones photograph. The object of interest can most likely be interpreted as a long neck arched over the water or the arched segment of an eel-like body. Mrs. Jones informed that this object, when moving, was only briefly held above the water in this position.

Though N.rhombopteryx has been given a Latin name, no biological type specimen has yet been retrieved and the description was based on photographic evidence only. For this reason, there is much debate over the validity of this taxon and much speculation as to the animal's zoological affinities, which may never be resolved until a biological sample is retrieved. Sir Peter Scott and, before him, Dr. Denys Tucker of the British Museum thought that N.rhombopteryx was derived from the marine reptile Plesiosaurs (order Sauropterygia, sub-order Plesiosauria). Some plesiosaurs had long necks with small heads, but all had turtle-like bodies (without a shell), four paddle-like limbs and moderately long tails. Plesiosaurs are generally thought to have gone extinct 65 million years ago at the end of the Cretaceous period, but there is inconclusive geological evidence that some forms may have persisted into the Palaeocene, early in the Age of the Mammals. Though it is generally assumed that no reptile could tolerate the frigid water temperature of Lock Ness, there is geological evidence of plesiosaurs inhabiting a similar body of freshwater within the Antarctic during the early Cretaceous. Obviously, some types of plesiosaurs had thermal adaptions like those of the living Leatherback turtle (Dermochelys coracea), which regularly goes into Arctic waters feeding on jellyfish, or were fully homoeothermic.



Dr. Roy Mackal of the University of Chicago has proposed that N.rhombopteryx is derived from some type of basilosaurine cetacean such as Basilosaurus or Zeuglodon (biologist Gary Mangiacopra also endorsed this theory for N.rhombopteryx, but has since abandoned it). These primitive cetaceans had crocodile-like heads, elongated and eel-like bodies (but with body thickening in the thoracic region), strong paddle-like anterior appendages, reduced rear appendages and caudal flukes approaching those of modern cetaceans. The last basilosaurines are thought to have died out 38 million years ago. Dr. Mackal speculates that some form may have persisted and evolved a long neck approximating that of some plesiosaurs.

Though this controversy will not be resolved until physical evidence is at hand, my two favoured hypotheses for the zoological affinities of N.rhombopteryx are some kind of plesiosaur derivative or a giant, thick-bodies anguilliform fish resembling the conger eels. In deference to Mrs. Jones, who is convinced that the animal she observed was eel-like in nature, I will discuss some of the points concerning the giant eel hypothesis.

The pectoral fins of mature freshwater eels (order Apodes, genus Anguilla) and mature conger eels (order Apodes, genus Conger) does approximate the shape of the large, paddle-like appendage photographed by the Academy of Applied Sciences in Loch Ness in 1972, which was the primary evidence on which the formal description of N.rhombopteryx was based. Though it is generally assumed that no eel species possesses a long "neck" like that repeatedly observed on specimens of N.rhombopeteryx, with considerable distance between the head and pectoral fins. F.W. Tesch, a German eel specialist, has reported a developmental anomaly among eels in which the body grows exceptionally large and faster than the growth of the individual's skin. This condition sometimes results in the vertebrae being bunched together, compressed and dislocated, somewhat approaching the appearance of the enigmatic vertical humps often reported in eyewitness observations of N.rhombopteryx.

Though some have suggested that N.rhombopteryx may represent abnormally large specimens of the common European freshwater eel (Anguilla anguilla), I think it more likely that they are specimens of the European conger eel (Conger conger), which grows to larger size, if they are in fact a known species. Conger eels of 8 feet in length with the diameters of telephone poles are documented, though one of twice those dimensions would be required to account for observations of N.rhombopteryx. Though the conger eels are thought to be wholly marine, congor eel larvae has been documented in the freshwater of the Hudson River, New York, U.S.A., in 1986. In addition, some types of marine eels possess elongated fleshy tubes extending from their external nares, which may approximate the anomalous horn-like appendages reported on the heads of some specimens of N.rhombopteryx and which are visible in what some researchers believe may be a photograph of the head of a specimen of N.rhombopteryx, obtained by the Academy of Applied Sciences in 1975.

There are documented cases of individual eel specimens with abnormal body thickening in the thoracic region, approximating the morphology of plesiosaurs. If N.rhombopteryx does represent some kind of anguilliform fish, the above phenomenon could explain observations of individuals with a large central body and other individuals with a standard eel-like configuration, all within the same species. Many types of eels have a limited amphibious ability, being able to obtain oxygen from the air through their skin, so observations on land are not ruled out.

Though many of the features cited in the following passages are particular to certain eel species, eels as a group seem prone to various developmental anomalies and are somewhat plastic in their morphology. As eel specimens mature, their skeleton decalcifies, approaching a cartilage state, which might explain the difficulty in finding skeletal remains of N.rhombopteryx, if it is an anguilliform fish. If n.rhombopteryx represents an unknown eel species, it could represent a relief Pleistocene form. The Loch Ness Project has documented relief forms of Pleistocene zooplankton in Loch Ness.

Mrs. Jones told me that, based on her observations, she feels that N.rhombopteryx is unlikely to be a plesiosaur derivative, as she had previously assumed, because her impressions were of an elongated, eel-like animal. But she also stated that the long neck and vertical undulations she observed were decidedly anomalous for eels (there may be support for the basilosaurine hypothesis in these observations). She likened the animal she observed to the recently described Cadborsaurus willsi of the North Pacific. C. willsi has been formally described from photographs of what is believed to be a juvenile specimen retrieved from the stomach of a sperm whale in 1937. It is an animal with a pseudo-mammalian, moose-like head, flipper-like pectoral appendages, an elongated, eel-like body and rear appendages configured like that of cetacean caudal flukes. It has been tentatively classified as a plesiosaur derivative, though others have alternately suggested basilosaurine affinities. Dr. Ed Bousfield of the Canadian Museum of Nature,

Ottawa, has suggested that a population of freshwater-adapted, landlocked C. willsi inhabit Okanogan Lake in British Columbia, Canada. If C. willsi is a plesiosaur derivative, one can postulate an eel-like body configuration without abandoning the plesiosaur hypothesis. After all, who knows what 65 million years of evolution could have done to these animals. At any rate, C. willsi and N.rhombopteryx may share a common ancestor.

Whatever the zoological affinities of N.rhombopteryx may be, there are two general schools of though concerning how these animals came to be in Lock Ness: (1) Individuals regularly go back and forth between Loch Ness and the open sea undetected or (2) there is a resident breeding population of these animals that is now landlocked but that entered Loch Ness when glacial melting at the end of the last ice age caused the sea to flood into Loch Ness, temporarily making it an arm of the Atlantic Ocean. Of the two hypotheses, I favour the latter.

Since the very existence of N.rhombopteryx is still controversial and all evidence in support of the idea is intensely scrutinized, I strongly urge that scientific evaluation of the Nora Jones photographs be done if, for no other reason, only to strengthen their value as evidence. If any parties wish to dispute evidence presented within the text, I can be e-mailed through the "Bessie cam" website and will refer said parties to the proper documentation.

In conclusion, the Nora Jones photographic images effectively demonstrate that, under the right circumstances, video monitoring systems, such as the "Bessie cam" and "Nessie cam", are likely to yield fruitful results.

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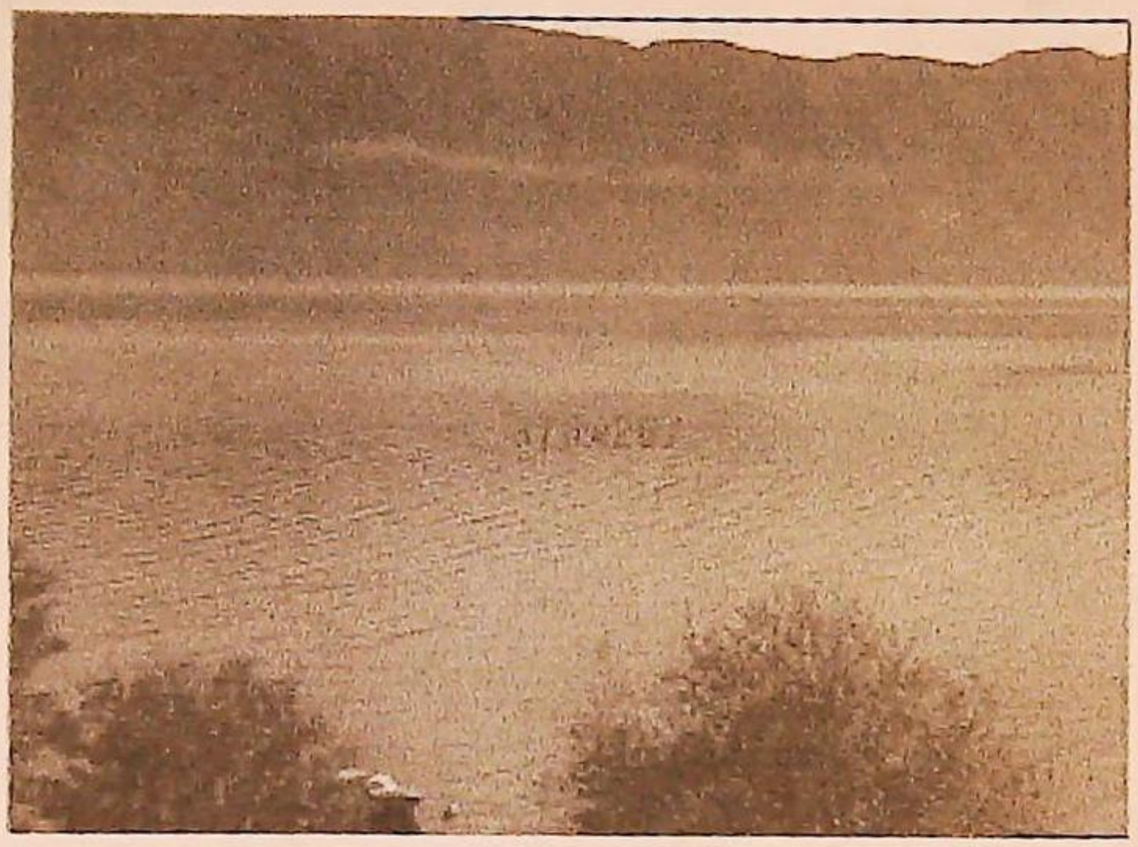
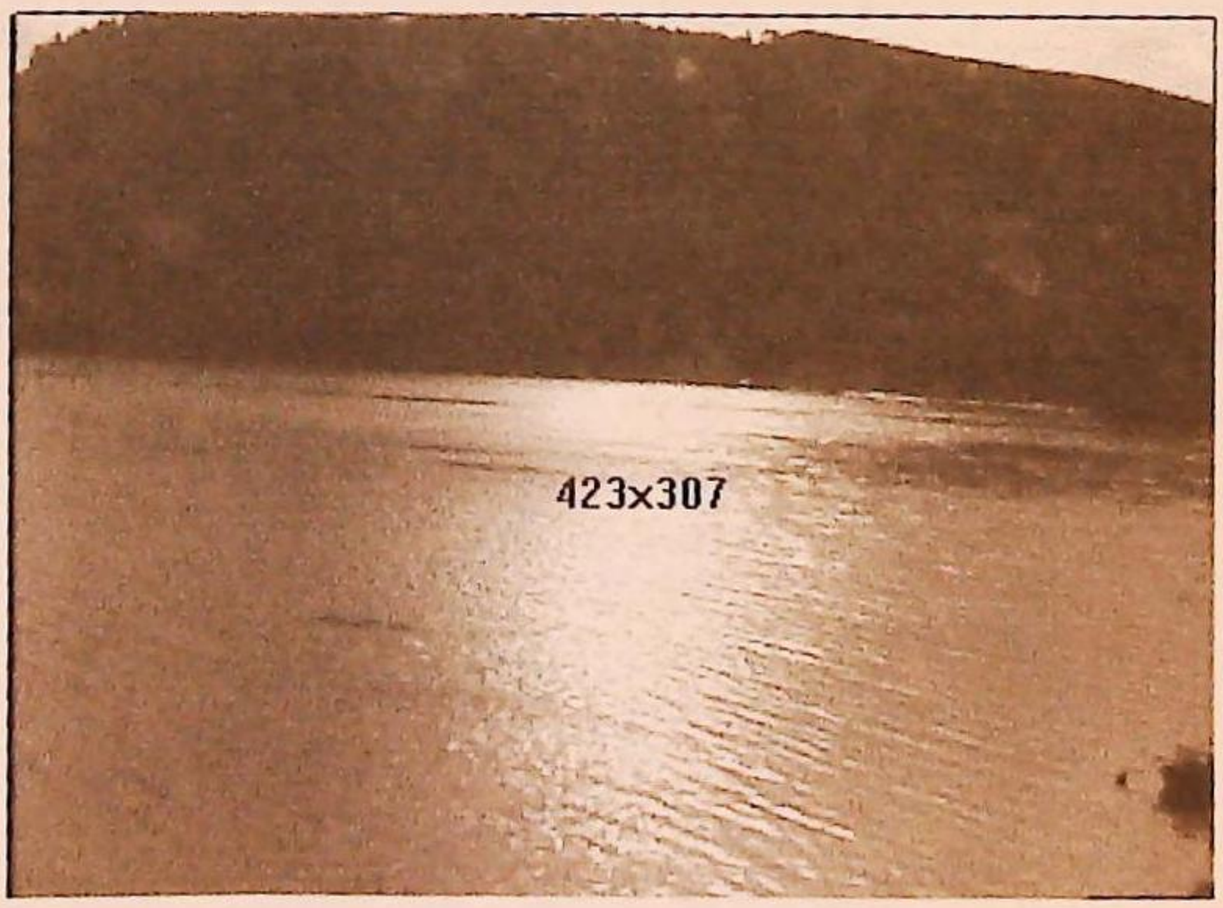
Hi Scott this is your page.

Posted November 20, 1999

Dear sirs, I read your report on the pictures of the lock ness taking by Nora Jone's and was not impressed by them. I was going to the live cam to capture a picture and doctor it up to show you that it can be faked very easy. But when I went there I had my heart stuck in my neck! I saw something right away. I could not believe it. I did not have my paint shop pro set on capture yet . But this is what I was able to get. You can see to the right a little wake and something black underwater.Near the right edge.In the middle.





Something was close to the top and I wish I could have taking the capture sooner.

Dear Scot

Excellent report and support you have utterly made all the bad feelings that Gary Campbell put in my head. Thank you so Much me and mom really appreciate the treatment on the subject. I couldnt have said it better myself thanks so Much. Nora Jones

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I have seen something in Lake Erie in November of 1995. I grew up living on the lake (lakefront property), and have never seen anything like that before or since. I have seen trees and logs floating in the lake, and this did not look like anything like that. It looked like a big snake. My brother came out and saw it too for a split second, but does not freely admit it to anyone because he (and I) have been made fun of. No one wants to believe it so they (family and friends) just laugh it off. I would like to have someone to talk to about it who will not make fun of me. Thank you.

Patty

PS. I will be taking vacation along lake Champlain this summer. If I see anything, I will let you know.

Dennis Hall sent me this photo for what it is worth...